**Reading Comprehension - The Natural World**



***Welcome to the United Arab Emirates!***

When you visit the UAE, the first thing you will notice when you leave the airport is the blue skies and dry hot weather! The UAE is in the Arabian Gulf where it shares *borders* with its *neighbours* Oman, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

The *landscape* of the UAE is covered mainly by large open deserts. However, you can also find *pleasant* surprises like mountains, lakes, rivers, caves, islands, lagoons, wadis and beautiful oases. Of course, there is also the sea of the Arabian Gulf! So, for a lot of visitors exploring the UAE offers a lot of *surprises* and natural beauty because it is not just a desert in the Middle East.

There are seven emirates, or *regions*, that make up UAE. The capital and the largest of the seven emirates is Abu Dhabi. Eighty percent of the land in UAE is taken up by Abu Dhabi. There are people living in all the seven Emirates; in cities, towns, villages and in the desert. However, you will find that the most of the people in the UAE live in the main cities like Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

There are always *sunny* blue skies in the UAE with *infrequent* rainfall in the cooler months from November through to March. The *temperature* is ***mild*** in December and January is the coolest month of the year. This means that people like turn off their air conditioners, open their windows and go outside to enjoy the cooler temperatures. The weather starts to get warmer in April and the *temperature* gets higher until it gets to August – the hottest month in the year. During August the average temperature is around 35 degrees! Hot!

People think that because the UAE is a dry desert it has no *wildlife* or plants. Well, the emirate of Abu Dhabi is home to many different species of plants and animals that have been able to live and survive the hot dry *climate* of the desert. The government has also worked hard to make Abu Dhabi, and the whole country, a lot more greener by planting trees, forests and gardens. The gardens and forests have attracted birds and other wildlife adding to the *environment* of the country.



One of the most common plants found in the UAE is the date palm. Its green leaves can be seen *waving* in the *breeze* along most roads or in gardens. During the hot weather the date palm offers shelter from the sun and food in the cool shady *oases* of the UAE.

***Come, see and enjoy the UAE!***

*neighbours pleasant surprises borders landscape oases sunny region*

*environment temperature climate wildlife waving breeze infrequent*

**Questions:**

1. What are the countries next to the United Arab Emirates?

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1. What will visitors find surprising about the UAE?

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1. What is the UAE’s largest region?

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1. Describe what the weather is like in the UAE.

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1. In paragraph 4, what do you think the word ***mild*** means?

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1. Why do people turn off their air conditioners in January?

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1. What time of the year do you think would be a good time for people to visit the UAE for a holiday? Explain why you think this would be a good time.

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1. Why do you think most people in the UAE live in the big cities like Abu Dhabi and Dubai?

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1. Do you think the government has done a good job at making the country more beautiful?

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